

Sixth Edition.

A

PASTORAL LETTER

TO THE

CATHOLIC CLERGY

OF THE

UNITED DIOCESES

OF

WATERFORD AND LISMORE,

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND

THOMAS HUSSEY, D. D.

Dearly beloved Brethren in Christ,

IN these critical and awful Times, when Opinions seem spreading over this Island, of a novel and dangerous Tendency—when the Remnants of old Oppression, and new Principles which tend to Anarchy, are struggling for Victory, and which in the Collision may produce the Ruin of Religion; when a moral Earthquake shakes all Europe, I felt no small Affliction and Alarm, upon receiving the superior Command of the Head of the Church, to preside over the Catholics of these United Diocesses, upon the Death of your most venerable, and ever to be regretted Prelate, your late Bishop.

In the Midst of these Fears and Alarms, it was a great Consolation to me, to be assured of the Piety, Zeal, and
Loyalty

1609/4939

Loyalty of the Clergy, under my Spiritual Care; and that their Exertions were constantly employed to keep the Laity within the Bounds of Religion, Morality, and Decorum. That no Part of Ireland was more exempt from Túrbulence, and Insubordination to the Laws, than this District; and that the Memory of the legal Injustices and Cruelties formerly practised in this Country, by Men, who made Religious Distinctions a Stalking Horse for Political Purposes, is completely and happily effaced, I hope, for ever

It is upon you, very reverend, and dearly beloved Brethren, that, under God, my Reliance is, that the Catholic Faith will produce its happy Effects, in mending and improving the Morals of the Flock, which I commit to your Care, respectively. Let me beseech you, to attach yourselves to them, by frequently instructing and exhorting them, especially as often as you approach the Sacred Altar; and certainly you cannot fail to attach them to you, by such a pious, exemplary, and zealous Conduct. Do not permit yourselves to be made the Instruments of the Rich of this World, who will try, by Adulation, and possibly by other Means, to make Instruments of you, over the Poor, for their own Temporal Purposes, and perhaps to render your Sacred Ministry odious to them. The Poor were always your Friends—they inflexibly adhered to you, and to their Religion, even in the worst of Times. They shared their scanty Meal with you, and with your Predecessors; and thereby preserved a Succession of Spiritual Pastors throughout the Kingdom. If they had acted otherwise, conformed to the Errors of the Nation, and imitated the Conduct of the Rich, who not only shut their Doors against you, but not unfrequently hunted you like wild Beasts, I should not be able to address the present respectable Body of Clergy, under my Spiritual Authority. Such a Consideration cannot fail to enliven your Zeal, and with affectionate Attachment towards them, to impel you to instruct them in their Duties, to restrain their Errors, and to correct their Vices—*Argue obsecra Increpa, in omni Patientia, & Doctrina.*—Upon all proper Occasions, *Speak to them the Words of eternal Life,* without Fear, or Deference, towards the Enemies of our Holy



Holy Faith. The Pastor, who doth not act in this Manner, towards his Flock, hath lost the Grace of his Vocation, or perhaps he never received it from God. He is the mercenary Shepherd, described in the Scripture, who, upon seeing the Wolf, runs away, and abandons his Flock, an easy Prey to him.

At the same Time that I charge you to avoid all Political Interferences, as unworthy the Ministers of him, *whose Kingdom is not of this World*, I call upon you to stand firm against all Attempts, which may be made, under various Pretexts, to withdraw any of your Flock from the Belief and Practice of the Catholic Religion. Remonstrate with any Parent, who will be so criminal as to expose his Offspring to those Places of Education, where his Religious Faith or Morals are likely to be perverted. If he will not attend to your Remonstrances, refuse him the Participation of Christ's Body: if he still should continue obstinate, denounce him to the Church, in order that, according to Christ's Commandment, *he be considered as a Heathen and Publican*.

If, in any of your Districts, the Catholic Military frequent Protestant Places of Worship, it is your Duty to expostulate with them, and to teach them how contrary to the Principles of the Catholic Faith it is, exteriorly to profess one Faith, and interiorly to believe another. That such Hypocrisy, even in the Eyes of the World, is mean and pusillanimous, as well as odious and abominable in the Sight of God. That the military Garb they wear, implies a manly Candour, that abhors such Duplicity. That this manly Candour is peculiarly the Character of an Irish Soldier, who ought not to be ashamed of openly professing the Catholic Religion—the Religion of Irishmen. Instruct them, that in all Matters regarding the Service of the King, their Officers are competent to command them, and that they are bound to obey: but in Matters regarding the Service of the King of Kings, their Officers have no Authority over them. Their Personal Religion is their own natural, uncontrollable, imprescriptible Right, subject to the Spiritual Authority of the Catholic Church, and in which the Laws of the Land cannot
enjoy

enjoy a coercive Authority. In all Temporal Matters, they are subject to their Temporal Rulers. In all Spiritual Matters, they are subject to their Spiritual Rulers. These two Authorities, like parallel Lines in Mathematics, can never touch each other. By the smallest Declination, they lose even their Names. Guard them from being deluded by the hack-nied Phrase of "Liberality of Sentiment." Surely Liberality of Sentiment does not consist in holding all Creeds, and all Forms of Worship, to be equal! He who thus expresses himself, is a Latitudinarian, who despises all Creeds—all Forms of Worship! The Man of true Liberality, is he, who conscientiously believes, and scrupulously follows, that Creed and Form of Worship, which is conformable to his Conscience, yet lives in Charity—in Concord—in Amity with all others, of every Religious Persuasion. The Man of true Liberality, is he, who employs his Conscience as the Helm with which he steers, in his Religious Voyage, leaving others to steer theirs by a similar Guide. The Man of true Liberality, is he, with whom a Difference in religious Opinions, makes no Difference in Social Life,—living in equal Harmony with all, and frequently bestowing more Kindness, and more Bounty, upon those who differ from him in Religious Opinions, when they want it more, than upon those of his own Communion. The Man of true Liberality, is he, who, when raised above the Rest, to govern a great People, scorns to attend to the paltry Distinctions of Sect or Party—spurns from his Presence those interested Advisers of a dangerous Faction, who would dishonour him, and abuse the Sacred Name of Majesty, to enrich themselves; but, like a true Patriot, raises to Power and Influence, those whom, in his Conscience, he thinks of most Ability and Integrity, to serve King and Country. To sum up the whole, the truly liberal Man, is he, who makes his Religion the Guide for his own personal and private Conduct, and not a Rule to guide—to govern—or to compel others to act against their Conscience, and their Religion.

The many compulsory Means lately employed (and several Instances of them within this very Diocese, not many Days since), to drive the Catholic Military to Protestant Places of
worship,

Worship, alarmed the *true* Friends to the King and his Service, and every Well-wisher to the Peace and Quiet of the Country. Such unwarrantable Steps could not make Profelytes of the Catholic Military—it might in Time, make them indifferent to all Forms of Worship, and thereby Jacobinize them upon the French Scale, and perhaps in the Hour of Danger, induce them to forget their Duty, and their Loyalty, in order to be revenged of their Persecutors.

Oh, how different are the Principles of a Catholic Soldier, educated in the Belief, and living in the full Exercise of his Religion ! He clearly convinces his Countrymen, that military Valour is not inconsistent with Religious Piety ; but that, on the contrary, they are natural Allies. That, when called to protect and defend his Country, he is fearless, and intrepid, in the Midst of Danger : His Bosom glowing with this Consideration, that his Death upon his Post, promotes him to a superior Post, in Eternity. The Unbeliever, who sees nothing beyond the Grave, more naturally shrinks from the Danger of his Dissolution ; or, if he seems to assume Courage, it is either the brutal Insensibility of his Temper, or an artificial Mask, which he puts on, to screen him from the Contempt which is sure to follow Cowardice. But the Courage and Intrepidity of a true Catholic, in the Discharge of his Duty, is a calm heroic Intrepidity, which sees the Danger in his Road, but sees Immortality beyond it. He marches courageously on, sure that if he falls, it is to rise again beyond the Grave. But when the Unbeliever sees the Danger, he sees nothing beyond it ; and thinks, that if he falls, that Moment puts a final, and fatal Period, to all his Schemes of Ambition—of Fortune—and Pleasure, and that he *sinks into eternal Night*—never—never to rise again. Surely such an impious Idea is capable of transmuting even a naturally brave Man, into a cowardly Slave. Let me say all, in one Sentence. Those Sentiments of Intrepidity—of Fidelity—of Honour, which high Birth, and polished Education, impress upon those of an elevated Sphere in Life, cannot be superior to the Sentiments of Fidelity, of Courage, and of Honor, which the Catholic Religion, *if sincerely believed, and piously practised*, would inspire into the lowest in
the

the Ranks ; and who, if his Duty calls him, would shew a Courage and Intrepidity equal to Alexander and Cæsar ; and as unfulfilled Loyalty and Integrity as those Statesmen and Generals who regulate Kingdoms, or who defend them.

In all your Proceedings, very reverend and dearly beloved Brethren, avoid intermixing the Politics of the World, with the sublime and heavenly Maxims of the Catholic Religion—they have not the smallest Connection with each other. The one is Spiritual—the other is Temporal : the one regards the transitory Affairs of this World—the other the eternal Affairs of the World to come. As the Catholic Faith is a Religion preached to all Nations, and to all People, so it is suitable to all Climes, and all Forms of Government—Monarchies or Republics—Aristocracies or Democracies. Despotic or Popular Governments are not the Concerns of the Catholic Faith. It may well suit a small Sect to regulate its Creed and Form of Worship, according to the Shape and Form of Government of the limited Boundaries where that Sect arose, exists, and dies away. Not so the Religion, which the Prophet foretold should extend from the Rising to the Setting Sun, which has been propagated and promulged from Peru to China, from the East to the West Indies, from Pole to Pole—teaching the same Doctrine—administering the same Sacraments, and offering up the adorable Sacrifice of the Redeemer, wherever Man is found, and God adored. It is therefore called the *Catholic*, or Universal Religion. It may well suit the Laity of your respective Districts, to pursue their Temporal Concerns, and their Temporal Politics, by such Ways as appear to them fair, peaceable, and loyal ; and their past Conduct is a Proof that they are incapable of pursuing them by any other Means. If their Conduct has always been loyal and peaceable, even in the worst of Times—if, even when Religious Penalties made them total Strangers in their native Land—if, when the ruling Party, with Insolence in their Looks, and Oppression in their Hands, ground them down—when some of the most powerful Men in the Nation declared in the Senate, that they hoped to see the Day when no Catholic would dare to speak to a Protestant with his Hat on—when,
even

even the Course of Justice was perverted, and the Channels of it dried up, according to the Prejudices and party Views of the Judges who sat on the Bench, and were paid for the impartial Administration of it, by Taxes levied upon the oppressed Sufferers—yet, even in these provoking Times, if the Body of Catholics remained inflexibly attached to their Religion, and to their King, what have you to dread from their Proceedings, when not only the Judges are equitable and humane, but also a great Part of these impolitic Religious Penalties are removed, and the Rest of them in such a State of Progress to be totally removed? That however a JUNIO, for their own interested, or other sinister Views, may raise Mobs to try to throw Obstacles against the total Repeal of them, yet all their Efforts must be useless—The vast Rock is already detached from the Mountain's Brow, and whoever opposes its Descent and Removal, must be crushed by his own rash Endeavours. The Popery Laws are upon the Eve of being extinguished for ever; and may no wicked Hand ever again attempt to divide this Land, by making Religious Distinctions a Mask, to divide—to disturb—to oppress it.

Make your Flock sensible to the Honor of being accounted a Member of the Catholic Communion—that they are not Members of a small Sect, limited to that Country where the Sect itself was formed. They are Members of a great Church, which has lasted more than 1700 Years—which flourished in every Part of the habitable World.—*In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum, & in fines orbis terræ verba eorum*—and that Christ has promised that it will flourish until Time shall be no more. *Usque ad consummationem Sæculi—Portæ inferi non prevalebunt adversus eam.* That consequently, they should not be ashamed to belong to a Religion, which so many Kings and Princes—so many of the most polished and learned Nations of the World, glory in professing.

Remind them, that two Centuries of Persecution have tried, in vain, to pervert them: That the Annals of the Church—the History of Mankind, does not afford another Example like theirs of Perseverance in their Religious Principles.

ciples. That we find, in the History of every other Nation, or People, that a much shorter Time was sufficient, by Penal Restrictions of Religion, to gain over the People to the Religion of the State; but that two Centuries of persecuting Laws—immense Sums of Money given by Parliament to gain over Profelytes, and levied upon those very People, whose Creeds they thereby endeavoured to purchase, left still the great Body of the Nation faithful to that Spark which St. Patrick lighted at the great Altar of the Catholic Church, and spread over this Island; and that Nine-tenths of the Nation at large, and Ninety-nine Hundredths of this Diocese, are still faithful and steady Catholics, notwithstanding what they and their Ancestors suffered for their Fidelity; and for which they are as unrivalled in the History of the Church—as insulated an Exception to the prevaricating Versatility of Man, as the geographical Situation of the Island itself to the Rest of the World.

That Portion of the Catholics of Ireland, which God has committed to my Spiritual Care, I call upon you, very reverend and dearly beloved Brethren, as my Coadjutors and Assistants, to aid me, by Word, and by Example, to instruct, and to feed, with the *Word of Salvation*, and with the *Bread of Angels*. It is a laborious, but it is also a meritorious, and an honourable Employment. It forms the strongest Bulwark to the State, by being the best Supplement to the Laws; which, *without Morals, are vain*. A faithful Discharge of these Duties, will form our Crown, and our Glory, when, at the last Day, the Supreme Pastor will come to judge Us, and to judge the World.

DUBLIN: PRINTED BY

H. FITZPATRICK, 2, UPPER ORMOND-QUAY.

1797.

